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tion in Roman literature explaining the significance of the symbolic use of this color, so striking in itself and so widely employed. A few errors in typography and in references have been noted. But these will not be recorded here: it is much more agreeable to commend the thoroughness of a chapter that places the problem squarely and honestly before us and corrects the errors of several previous investigators (compare Notes 37, 70). It probably never will be possible to bring all cases under one category or to prove the historical evolution of the significance of the use of purple.

Miss Armstrong's conclusion (37-38) that to the Romans white represented the clear light of day, and hence was pleasing to the powers of the sky, and that black was the color of the night and of the interior of the earth, therefore fitting for the underworld, rests chiefly upon the rarely violated rule of the Romans that white victims were suitable to the gods above and black victims to the gods below. This conclusion is fortified by several corollaries: that black animals and black garments were sacred to the dark divinities; that black signified bad luck, while white indicated good fortune; that white garments were regularly used in the worship of heavenly deities. While this general conclusion is in all probability correct, we ought not to limit ourselves and associate only one idea with whiteness and only one idea with blackness. White assuredly came to stand for purity, even if it did not have this meaning originally; the white of the Vestal's costume is not treated at all. Fehrle's thesis⁷ has much evidence to support it and we ought not to rule out his hypothesis that the religious wearing of white was prophylactic, simply because the Romans made no use of this color in burial. The color undoubtedly gained in time several meanings and the author's delimitation of its significance seems unfair to Roman imagination.

The same criticism applies to Chapter IV (39-50), on the use of gold. The custom of gilding the horns of sacrificial animals was widespread, and the use of golden objects by gods, kings, and heroes is attested by interesting examples from many different lands. But the data brought forward do not bear out the author's contention that gold objects were especially ascribed to the sun and his race. The cynical speech of Janus in Ovid, *Fasti* 1.191-226, appears to me to reveal the primary secret of the use of gold in Roman religious rites and ceremonies. The discussion of the significance of gold in India as representing success, prosperity, glory, health, long life, and even immortality shows the possibilities involved. Pliny⁸ associated not only costliness but also purity with gold. Miss Armstrong⁹ admits that a variety of influences may have affected Vergil in representing the Po with gilded horns. She proposes an interesting interpretation of the significance of the Vergilian golden bough (49-50). The chapter has a maximum of suggestive material; but it seems to me a mis-

take, however fascinating the enterprise, to equate gold and the sun, because of the truth of the propositions that fire = sun = life, and gold = life. The use of gold in medicine and in charms is also recorded by the author and it is clear that gold was regarded as possessing both healing and harmful powers¹⁰. But this excellent chapter suffers from an undue emphasis upon the solar hypothesis.

In conclusion, may I not express regret that the Bibliography does not list all the works cited in the course of the dissertation? Portal, *De Couleurs Symboliques*, is not mentioned at all. An index of the ancient sources referred to would have been valuable. The author shows command of her literature, but a more direct statement of indebtedness to Pauly-Wissowa, to Aust, or to others for accumulated illustrative material might have been expected and would have been useful to the reader.

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The Life and Reign of the Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus. By Maurice Platnauer. Oxford: at the University Press (1919). Pp. 222. \$5.65.

In this study of the life and reign of Septimius Severus Mr. Platnauer has made a valuable contribution to the history of the principate, a contribution signalled by independence of judgment, a thorough knowledge of the sources, and a careful discussion of many of the difficult problems which they present.

The first chapter is devoted to a discussion of the literary tradition. This involves a consideration of the vexed problem of the authorship and the editorship of the *Historia Augusta*. In concluding a lengthy exposition and criticism of the various theories advanced on this point up to 1914 the author voices the opinion that the evidence is too slight to admit of any final judgment. His own view is that the Lives were written by the persons to whom they are traditionally ascribed, at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century; that they were subsequently collected and edited, probably by one of the six authors, in the first third of the fourth century; and that it is possible but not certain that alterations were made in the text during this recension. He also supports the idea that two main sources were used by these authors, one chronological and reliable, the other biographical and worthless.

Mr. Platnauer emphasizes the fact that the value of the Lives to historians is largely independent of this question of authorship, and must be determined in the light of the sources used by the authors of the *Historia*, and the faithfulness with which they followed them. On this question, too, he finds it impossible to speak with finality. Yet the *Historia* cannot be entirely disregarded, and so he reaches the working rule that, in case of disagreement among the literary sources, where none is supported by other evidence, Herodian is to be preferred to Spartian (the author of the *Life of Severus*),

¹⁰The proposed interpretation (see Note 115) is not convincing.

⁷E. Fehrle, *Die Kultische Keuschheit im Altertum*, 68 ff. (A. Topfmann, Giessen, 1910).

⁸N. H. 33.58-60.

⁹Note 78; Vergil, *Georgics* 4.371.

and Dio Cassius (in Xiphilinus's Epitome) to both. The epigraphic and numismatic sources are dealt with in the second chapter.

Chapter III traces the life of Severus to 193 A.D. Mr. Platnauer accepts and defends the traditional view that Severus began his public career as an *advocatus fisci*. However, he is skeptical with regard to the tale of the impeachment of Severus for having consulted astrologers when proconsul of Sicily in 189. In an appendix to this chapter he discusses the date of Caracalla's birth, which he places on April 4, 188, a date that would dispose of the possibility of his being the son of Marcia, the first wife of Severus.

The next three chapters are devoted to the revolt of Severus and his wars with Niger and Albinus. It seems curious that the revolt of the latter and the offer of the title of Caesar which Severus made to him should be dismissed with the words "Albinus he had mollified by the offer of Caesarship and the promise of a consulship" (page 61). Something more detailed and definite would certainly be in place in Chapter VI, to correspond to the account given of Niger's actions, on page 76.

Chapter VII discusses the war in the East between 197 and 202, and contains a chronological note which attempts to account for the movements of Severus between July, 200, and June, 202 A.D. The eighth chapter covers the period from 202 to the death of Severus in 211. To this is appended an excursus on the Roman Wall between the Tyne and the Solway Firth, showing, on the basis of literary and archaeological evidence, that, contrary to the current view, Severus did not replace an earth wall by one of stone, but merely repaired a preexisting stone wall, which probably dates from the time of Hadrian or the Antonines.

The chapter (IX) on religion and philosophy is somewhat sketchy and perfunctory in character, although containing an interesting account of the circle of Julia Domna. We miss any reference to Cumont's *Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain*. It is hardly necessary to point out that it is an anticipation to speak of the Roman bishops of 189 and 205 A.D. as Popes.

Chapter X, *De Re Militari*, deserves particular notice because in it Mr. Platnauer attacks several widely accepted views of the military policy of Septimius Severus. First, here (and also on page 67), he takes issue with the view of Domazewski that Severus was responsible for the barbarizing of the Roman army. This view rests upon the fact that Severus opened the ranks of the pretorian guard to soldiers from all the provinces, and upon the dearth of inscriptional evidence to Italian centurions and legionary tribunes subsequent to this reign, from which is drawn the conclusion that "the price which Severus offered the provincial legionary for the crown was the extermination of the centurion of Italian-Roman origin". In answer to this Mr. Platnauer points out that the pretorian guard had previously been opened to Spaniards, Macedonians, and Noricans, and therefore the admission of other provincials proves no very radical departure from the previous imperial

policy, nor does it necessarily indicate the inclusion of less civilized elements in the ranks of the guard. Furthermore, since Domazewski himself admits that "after the Severi the indication of origin disappears from the inscriptions of centurions", the absence of any positive evidence for Italians does not prove that they were purposely excluded. As a matter of fact Italian-born centurions did serve under and after Severus, as did Italian officers in the *Auxilia*. Finally, Mr. Platnauer argues, even if we grant that the Italian centurions were superseded by provincials, this would not prove a barbarization of the army because of the general high level of culture obtaining at the opening of the third century throughout the Empire as a whole.

It seems to me that the attempt of Domazewski and others to render Severus responsible for a deliberate barbarizing of the army has been fairly disproved. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the fact that after Hadrian the legions were recruited from the districts in which they were stationed, which meant that the rank and file at least were drawn from the borders of the provinces, that is from the least civilized or most barbarous elements within the Empire. In this sense a barbarization of the army did occur in the course of the second and early third centuries, but it began long before the reign of Severus.

In the second place, Mr. Platnauer attacks the view that Severus was responsible for relaxing the bonds of discipline in the army, particularly by permitting the legionaries to live with their families outside the camps to which they belonged, while the camps became merely a "combination of drill-ground and clubrooms". For this he holds that evidence is totally wanting. What Severus probably did was to permit the legionary to contract a legal marriage when in active service. Admitting an increase in pay, more rapid promotion, and new honors and civilian appointments made accessible to soldiers, Mr. Platnauer concludes that we can only say that the "principate of Severus marks an epoch in the civilizing and refining of the legionary's life". In the garrisoning of Italy with the Second Parthian legion, the author sees not merely one more step in the long process of equalizing the status of Italy and the provinces, but also an anticipation of the military reform of Diocletian which created a field army in addition to the frontier garrisons.

Chapter XI, on the home administration of Severus, is an excellent summary of the administrative changes effected in this reign, and the last chapter presents a picture of contemporary conditions in the province. The flourishing state of the treasury and the general well-being of the provincials present no evidences for a decline of the Empire under the first African princeps. In short, Mr. Platnauer refuses to concur in the judgment of Gibbon that Severus was "the principal author of the decline of the Roman Empire" or in the statement of Domazewski that he planted "the despotism of the East in the soil of the West".

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